

Posture Statement of
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Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense

Chairman Inouye, Senator Cochran, distinguished members of the committee, it is my privilege to report on the posture of the United States Armed Forces.

First, I would like to thank our Service men and women and their families. Those who defend this Nation and the families who support them remain our most valuable national assets and deserve continued gratitude. I want especially to honor the sacrifices of our wounded, their families, and the families of the fallen. We are redefining our duty to them as a Nation, a duty which I believe lasts for life. I thank everyone in this distinguished body for their continued efforts in support of this cause.

Your Armed Forces stand as the most combat experienced in this Nation's history. Deeply experienced from decades of deployments in harm's way and from seven and a half years of war, they have remained resilient beyond every possible expectation. They make me, and every American, very proud.

I am grateful for your understanding of the stress our Armed Forces and their families are under. Your recognition of their burdens and uncertainties has been a vital constant throughout these challenging times. Thank you for your support of initiatives such as transferring G.I. Bill benefits to military spouses and children, military spouse employment support, expanded childcare and youth programs, homeowner's assistance programs, and, most importantly, long-term comprehensive support of Wounded Warrior families.

This testimony comes after a notable transition of Administration, the first during wartime since 1968 and the first since the 9-11 attacks on the homeland.

Conducted in the face of threats and continued wartime missions overseas, the transition was marked by courtesy and concern for the mission and our forces from start to finish. Transition obviously means change, but in this case, it also meant continuity in providing for the common defense. Continuity has been and is particularly important at this juncture as we implement the key strategic changes underway that end the war in Iraq through a transition to full Iraqi responsibility and reinforce a whole of government effort in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

While several key developments have emerged since I last testified, in particular the global economic crisis, the three strategic priorities for our military that I outlined last year remain valid. First, we must continue to improve stability and defend our vital national interests in the broader Middle East and South Central Asia. Second, we must continue efforts to reset, reconstitute, and revitalize our Armed Forces. Third, we must continue to balance global strategic risks in a manner that enables us to deter conflict and be prepared for future conflicts. The three strategic priorities are underpinned by the concept of persistent engagement, which supports allies and partners through programs abroad and at home and which must be led by and conducted hand-in-hand with our interagency partners to achieve sustainable results.

Key Developments

Over the past year your Armed Forces continued to shoulder a heavy burden worldwide, particularly in the Middle East and South Central Asia. Our emphasis has rightfully remained on the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and against al-Qaeda extremists, though we remain ready to face other global challenges.

Per the President's guidance on February 27th, we will end our combat mission in Iraq by August 31, 2010. The Joint Chiefs and I believe this is a prudent course given the sustained security gains we have seen to date and Iraq's positive trajectory. This current plan preserves flexibility through early 2010 by

conducting the majority of the drawdown after the Iraqi election period. In the meantime, our troops are on course to be out of Iraqi cities by June of this year and two more brigades will return to the United States without replacement by the end of September. Drawing down in Iraq is not without risks. Lingered political tensions remain and violence could flare from time to time. Assuming no major surprises, however, we will successfully transition fully to the advise and assist mission over the next 16 months and lay the groundwork for a continued partnership with Iraq that promotes security in the region.

In Afghanistan and Pakistan we are providing additional resources to address the increase in violence. The strategic goal as outlined by the President on March 27, 2009, is to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda and its extremist allies in Pakistan and Afghanistan and to prevent their return to either country. As that strategy was being developed, we began responding to conditions on the ground by reinforcing the International Security and Assistance Force commander with some 17,700 troops, the majority of which will arrive by this summer. Our aim in Afghanistan is to check the momentum of the insurgency, train additional forces, and ensure security for the Afghan national elections in August, while in Pakistan we will work with the Pakistani military to further develop their counterinsurgency skills and build stronger relationships with Pakistani leaders at all levels.

We will shift the main effort from Iraq to Afghanistan in the coming year, though our residual footprint in Iraq will remain larger than in Afghanistan until well into 2010. The strategic environment we face beyond these ongoing conflicts is uncertain and complex. In the near term, we will maintain focus on threats to our vital national interests and our forces directly in harm's way. Increasingly, the greatest mid-term military threats will come from transnational concerns – the proliferation of nuclear weapons and missile technology, transnational terrorism, competition over energy, water, and other vital resources, natural disasters and pandemics, climate change, and space vulnerabilities.

A prominent aspect of this shifting strategic environment is the disturbing trend in cyber attacks, where we face both state and non-state actors.

Cyberspace is a borderless domain wherein we operate simultaneously with other U.S. government agencies, allies, and adversaries. Effectiveness is increasingly defined by how well we share information, leverage technology, and capitalize on the strength of others. When appropriate, DoD will lead. Likewise, when appropriate, DoD will provide support and ensure collective success. Our national security and that of our allies is paramount.

A critical new challenge has been added to the strategic environment – the global economic crisis. Although we do not fully understand the impact or depth of this worldwide recession, dire economic conditions increase the pressures for protectionism. They also staunch the flow of remittances, which provide enormous benefits to developing nations. Prolonged downturns can generate internal strife, authoritarian rule, virulent nationalism, manufactured crises, and state conflict. Decreased energy prices have also affected the global economy, on one hand reducing the resources available to some malicious actors, but on the other hand hurting some key allies. Any conflict involving a major energy producer, however, could escalate prices rapidly, which would undoubtedly hamper prospects for a quicker global recovery. Economic concerns will increasingly be the lens through which we – and our partners and competitors – filter security considerations. Many nations may decrease expenditures on defense and foreign assistance, thus making smaller the pool of collective resources with which we have to address challenges. We will work through our routine military-to-military contacts to address this tendency directly and help to coordinate priorities, emphasizing that we are all bound together in this global economy.

Winning our Nation's current and future wars requires concurrent efforts to restore the vitality of the Armed Forces and balance global risk. I am grateful for Congress's continued support of the programs designed to return our units to the desired levels of readiness and for the honest debate engendered in these chambers to ascertain national interests and determine the best mix of capabilities and programs to protect those interests. The ability to debate these

national choices – openly and transparently – is just one of the attractive features of our Republic that others seek to emulate.

Our military remains capable of protecting our vital national interests. At the same time, the strain on our people and equipment from more than seven years of war has been tremendous. There is no tangible “peace dividend” on the horizon given the global commitments of the United States. We still face elevated levels of military risk associated with generating additional ground forces for another contingency should one arise. I do not expect the stress on our people to ease significantly in the near-term given operations in the Middle East, the strategic risk associated with continued regional instability in South Central Asia, and the uncertainty that exists globally. Over the next two years the number of forces deployed will remain high. The numbers will reduce, but at a gradual pace. The drawdown in Iraq is weighted in 2010, with the bulk of the combat brigades coming out after the Iraqi elections. At the same time, through the course of 2009 and into 2010, we will be reinforcing the effort in Afghanistan. Only in 2011 can we expect to see marked improvements in the dwell time of our ground forces.

We can not – and do not – face these global challenges alone. We benefit greatly from networks of partners and allies. Despite the economic downturn, the bulk of the world’s wealth and the majority of the world’s most capable militaries are found in those nations we call friends. Persistent engagement maintains these partnerships and lays the foundation upon which to build effective, collective action in times of security and economic crisis. In the coming years we must be careful not to shunt aside the steady work required to sustain these ties. By maintaining regional security partnerships, developing and expanding effective information sharing networks, and continuing military-to-military outreach, we improve the ability to monitor the drivers of conflict and help position our Nation for engagement rather than reaction. Such engagement also propels us toward the common good, relieves some of the burden on our forces, improves the protection of the homeland, and helps secure U.S. vital national interests.

Defend Vital National Interests in the broader Middle East and South Central Asia

Given its strategic importance and our vital national interests, the United States will continue to engage in the broader Middle East and South Central Asia – as a commitment to friends and allies, as a catalyst for cooperative action against violent extremism, as a deterrent against state aggression, as an honest broker in conflict resolution, and as a guarantor of access to natural resources. Yet we recognize that our presence in these regions can be more productive with a lower profile. The Iraq drawdown is the first step on the path to that end.

Attaining our goals in these critical regions requires time, resources, and endurance. Most of the challenges in the region are not military in nature and can only be met successfully from within. Our role remains one essentially of consistent, transparent partnership building. These actions send an unmistakable message to all that the U.S. remains committed to the common good, while steadily expanding the sets of partnerships available to address future challenges.

Central to these efforts in the Middle East and South Central Asia will be the relentless pressure we maintain on al-Qaeda and its senior leadership. Al-Qaeda's narrative will increasingly be exposed as corrupt and self-limiting. Though too many disaffected young men still fall prey to al-Qaeda's exploitation, I believe the populations in the region will ultimately reject what al-Qaeda offers. Our priority effort will remain against al-Qaeda, but we will also take preventative measures against the spread of like-minded violent extremist organizations and their ideologies to neighboring regions such as the Horn of Africa and the Sahel. The U.S. military's task is to partner with affected nations to combat terrorism, counter violent extremism, and build their capacity to shoulder this same burden.

Afghanistan and Pakistan are central fronts in the fight against al-Qaeda and militant global extremism and must be understood in relation to each other. Afghanistan requires additional resources to counter a growing insurgency partially fed by safe havens and support networks located within Pakistan. Additional U.S. troops will conduct counterinsurgency operations to enhance

population security against the Taliban in south/southwest Afghanistan and to accelerate and improve training and mentoring of Afghan security forces. As in Iraq, our troops will live among the population. We must make every effort to eliminate civilian casualties, not only because this is the right thing to do but also because it deprives the Taliban of a propaganda tool that exploits Afghan casualties and calls into question U.S./NATO endurance and effectiveness in providing security. Although we must expect higher Alliance casualties as we go after the insurgents, their sanctuaries, and their sources of support, our extended security presence must – and will – ultimately protect the Afghan people and limit both civilian and military casualties. Our troops will integrate closely with Afghan forces, with the objective of building Afghan security forces that are capable of assuming responsibility for their country's security.

We expect the reinforcements to have the most pronounced effect over the next 12-24 months. Security gains can only be assured when complemented by development and governance programs designed to build greater self sufficiency over time. Our commanders in the field can lay some of this groundwork through the proven Commanders Emergency Response Program to start smaller projects quickly, but these projects can not compensate for the larger, enduring programs required. A temporary boost in security that is not matched with commensurate political and economic development will not only fail to generate faith in the Afghan government and fail to convince Afghans of our commitment, but also fail to accomplish our objectives. Over time, these objectives will be met more through civilian agencies and non-governmental organizations, with a lighter military presence. Getting to that point, however, requires that military forces generate the security required for political and economic initiatives to take root.

Pakistan is crucial to our success in Afghanistan. In my nine trips to Pakistan, I've developed a deeper understanding of how important it is that we, as a Nation, make and demonstrate a long term commitment to sustaining this partnership. We are taking multiple approaches to rebuild and strengthen relationships and address threats common to both of our nations. One key approach in the near term is to help Pakistan's military to improve its overall –

and specifically its counterinsurgency – capabilities. Beyond the trainers we will continue to provide, the Pakistani Counterinsurgency Capability Fund and Coalition Support Funds provide us the means to address this issue directly, and I ask the Congress to support these initiatives and provide the flexibility to accelerate their implementation. We are committed to comprehensive accountability measures to ensure that these funds go exactly where they are intended to go and do not compromise other USG humanitarian assistance objectives. These programs will help the Pakistanis take continued action to combat extremist threats in western Pakistani territories which will complement the reinforcement of troops and special operations efforts in Afghanistan to maintain pressure on al-Qaeda and Taliban leadership. In addition to these initiatives, steady support of the Foreign Military Sales and Foreign Military Financing programs will help us to address the needs expressed by Pakistan's leaders and validated by our civil-military leadership. We will also be well served by the substantially larger request for International Military Education and Training exchanges with Pakistan, to help reconnect our institutions and forge lasting relationships. Military programs must also be supplemented by non-military investment and continued engagement, which further confirm our Nation's long term commitment.

In all, we must recognize the limits of what can be accomplished at what price and at what pace in both countries. This will be a long campaign. We are committed to providing sustained, substantial commitment to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Progress in Afghanistan and Pakistan will be halting and gradual, but we can steadily reduce the threats to our Nation that emanate from conditions in those countries.

In Iraq, we are on the path to stability and long-term partnership as codified in the Security Agreement. Political, ethnic, and sectarian tensions may continue to surface in sporadic bouts of violence. But we also expect that Iraq's Security Forces will continue to improve, malign Iranian influence will not escalate, and, although resilient, al-Qaeda in Iraq will not be able to regroup and reestablish the control it once had. I am heartened by the conduct of Iraq's

provincial elections in January and the election of a new Speaker of the Council of Representatives and expect additional political progress in the coming year.

The drawdown in Iraq carries inherent risks. But the plan that is underway provides sufficient flexibility for the ground commander to adjust to Iraqi political and security developments and to deal with the unexpected. We are currently working with Multi-National Force-Iraq, CENTCOM, SOCOM, TRANSCOM, and the Services on the mechanics of the drawdown and the composition of the roughly 35,000 to 50,000 strong transition force provided for in the Status of Forces Agreement that will remain in Iraq after August 31, 2010, to advise and assist the Iraqi Security Forces, conduct counter terrorism operations, and provide force protection to civilian agencies.

The Iranian government's sponsorship of violent surrogates and failure to improve the confidence of the international community in the intent of its nuclear program, contribute to instability in the broader Middle East. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps – Qods Force orchestrates the activities of its proxies in Iraq and Afghanistan, across the Levant, and beyond. Through these proxies, Iran inserts itself into the Israeli-Palestinian situation and Lebanese internal politics by its direct support of Hamas and Hizballah. Iran's continued failure to comply with UN Security Council resolutions and cooperate fully with the IAEA cast doubt on the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear program. Our allies in the region share our deep concerns about Iran's nuclear policies, which if unchecked could lead to further regional proliferation as other states would seek nuclear weapons as a hedge – an outcome that would serve neither Iran nor the region. Iran could be an immensely constructive actor in the region, and its choices in the near term will have far reaching consequences. As the Administration pursues diplomacy with Iran to address these serious concerns, we will continue to work with the international community to convince Iran to comply with its international obligations under UN Security Council resolutions.

Al-Qaeda has expressed the desire for WMD and its intent to strike the homeland is undisputed. Al-Qaeda would also likely use WMD against populations in the broader Middle East. Consequently, the nexus between violent

extremism and the proliferation of WMD remains a grave threat to the United States and our vital national interests. The defeat of al-Qaeda would significantly diminish the threat from this nexus, but does not fully remove it given the conceptual blueprint already established for other extremists. We will continue to support national efforts to counter, limit, and contain WMD proliferation from both hostile state and non-state actors. We will also team with partners inside and outside the broader Middle East to reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen regional governments' confidence that we can address the WMD threat. But we must recognize that this threat requires vigilance for the duration, given the magnitude of damage that can be wrought by even a single incident.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in particular the violence in Gaza in from Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip in late December 2008 and January 2009, continues to cast a pall across the region. The Peace Process is primarily a diplomatic endeavor, but one we support fully through such initiatives as the training and advising of legitimate Palestinian security forces, exchanges with Israeli counterparts, and cooperation with Arab military partners. These initiatives support broader national endeavors aimed at a reduction in violence, greater stability, and peaceful co-existence in this critical region.

Reset, Reconstitute, and Revitalize the Armed Forces

Protecting our Nation's interests in recent years has required the significant commitment of U.S. military forces. Indeed, extensive security tasks remain before us as we pursue the stated objectives in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, defeat the al-Qaeda network, prevent the spread of WMD, deter conflict, preserve our ability to project and sustain military power at global distances, and maintain persistent engagement with allies and partners around the globe. At the core of our ability to accomplish all of these tasks are the talented, trained, and well-equipped members of the Armed Forces. I remain convinced that investment in our people is the best investment you make on behalf of our citizens.

The pace of current commitments has prevented our forces from fully training for the entire spectrum of operations. Consequently, readiness to address the range of threats that might emerge has declined. The demands we have put on our people and equipment over the past seven years are unsustainable over the long-term. As we continue to institutionalize proficiency in irregular warfare, we must also restore the balance and strategic depth required to ensure national security. Continued operations that are not matched with appropriate national resources will further degrade equipment, platforms, and, most importantly, our people.

Our Nation's service members and their families are at the core of my efforts to reset, reconstitute, and revitalize our forces. Every decision I make takes into consideration their well being. The All-Volunteer Force has accomplished every mission it has been given, but at a high price. I do not take their service for granted and recognize the limits of their endurance. I remain extremely concerned about the toll the current pace of operations is taking on them and on our ability to respond to crises and contingencies beyond ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The dwell time of units is one key metric we watch closely for the Army and Marine Corps. Dwell time remains at approximately 1:1 for ground units, meaning one year deployed and one year at home for the Army, seven months deployed/seven months at home for the Marine Corps, and similar cycles for the Airmen and Sailors serving in joint expeditionary taskings. Dwell time will improve, but we cannot expect it to return to an interim 1:2 or the desired 1:3 or better for several years given the number of ground forces still tasked with re-posturing to Afghanistan, the advise and assist mission in Iraq after drawdown, and other global commitments. Special Operations Forces (SOF) face similar deployment cycles but improvements in their dwell time will lag the Army and Marine Corps given the demand for SOF expertise in the irregular warfare environment we face. A key part of the effort to improve dwell time is the continued commitment to the size of the Army, Marine Corps, and Special Operations Forces as reflected in the 2010 budget. Institution of the "Grow the

Force” initiative is an indispensable element of the long-term plan to restore readiness.

Our recruiters met the missions of their military departments for fiscal year 2008 and are well on track for fiscal year 2009. The Services have been able to reduce the number of conduct waivers issued and the Army in the recruiting year to date has seen a marked increase in the number of high school graduates joining its ranks, exceeding the Department of Defense Tier 1 Educational Credential Standard of 90% for all three Army components – Active, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve. Retaining combat-proven leaders and the people with the skills we need is just as important. The Services have benefitted from the full range of authorities given to them by Congress as retention incentives. I ask for your continued support of these programs, in particular the bonuses used by the Services to retain key mid-career active duty officers and enlisted. I also ask for your continued support of incentives for Reserve and National Guard service to provide flexibility and enhanced retirement benefits. We have made important strides in the past year in equipping these vital members of the Total Force, and their performance over the past seven years of war has been superb. Economic conditions will ameliorate some of the recruiting and retention pressure in the coming year, but we must recognize that personnel costs will continue to grow as we debate the national level of investment in defense.

As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I have spent the last 18 months meeting with Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, and civilian public servants. In them I recognize the differences in our generations, with the younger ones ever more comfortable with social networking and technology. Yet I recognize in all of them a strong thread of continuity that stretches back to the Nation’s beginnings. That thread is a keen awareness of how they and their influencers – parents, teachers, coaches, and peers – perceive the manner in which today’s veterans are treated. Service members know that the American people stand fully behind them, regardless of varying opinions over American policy. The All-Volunteer Force has earned this trust and confidence. This

contract must be renewed every day with the American people, who can never doubt that we will be good stewards of their most precious investment in their armed forces – the sons and daughters who serve our Nation.

Emblematic of that stewardship is the way we treat returning Wounded Warriors and the parents, spouses and family members who support them. As a Nation, we have an enduring obligation to those who have shouldered the load and who bear the visible and invisible scars of war, some of whom we unfortunately find in the ranks of the homeless. As leaders, we must ensure that all Wounded Warriors and their families receive the care, training, and financial support they need to become self-sufficient and lead as normal a life as possible – a continuum of care that lasts for life. This continuum extends especially to the families of the fallen. Our focus must be more on commitment rather than compensations, and on transition and ability rather than disability. To the degree that we fail to care for them and their families, and enable their return to as normal a life as possible, we undermine the trust and confidence of the American people.

One other area that has been particularly troubling since I last testified is the rise in the number of service member suicides. The Army in particular has been hit hard by a troubling increase over the past four years and an already disturbing number of suicides in 2009. We do not know precisely why this is occurring, though the increased stress of wartime is certainly a factor. All Service leaders are looking hard at the problem, to include ensuring that we make a service member's ability to seek mental health care both unimpeded and stigma free. This approach requires a cultural change in all of the Services that will take time to inculcate, but the seeds are planted and taking root. The program at Fort Hood, Texas, is just one example of how a commander-empowered that understands the problem as a result of stress rather than weakness and incorporates families can sharply reduce the number of suicides in a specific community.

The Department and the Services have also continued to expand comprehensive programs designed to prevent sexual abuse in the military. Such

abuse is intolerable and an unacceptable betrayal of trust. We will continue work towards the goal of eliminating this crime from our ranks.

Although the strain on our people is most acute, the strain on equipment and platforms is likewise significant. Through the reconstitution effort over the next decade, we will repair, rebuild, and replace the equipment that has been destroyed, damaged, stressed, and worn out beyond repair after years of combat operations. As Congress is well aware, Service equipment has been used at higher rates under harsher conditions than anticipated. The drawdown in Iraq through the end of next summer will provide us even greater first-hand insight into the state of ground force equipment as we retrograde multiple brigade combat team and enabler sets.

Beyond the wear and tear experienced by ground vehicles in Iraq and Afghanistan, our airframes are aging beyond their intended service lives. Indeed since Desert Storm, 18 years ago, the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy have flown near continuous combat missions over the Middle East and the Balkans with the F-15s, F-16s, and F-18s that were designed in the 1960s and 1970s and which, with upgrades, have proven their worth repeatedly over time. We have struggled with a wide variety of airframes, as seen in the fleet-wide groundings of all major fighter weapons systems at various times over the past five years, the strains on 30 year old P-3 Orion reconnaissance aircraft, and ongoing efforts to retire some of our C-130 Hercules and KC-135 Strato-tankers. Maintaining and acquiring sufficiently robust air and naval forces remain pressing requirements as these assets are central to ensuring the command of the sea and air that enables all operations. To help pay for these pressing requirements we must continue to look towards acquisition transformation that supports accelerated fielding of equipment before the speed of technology eclipses its value. We also need to reduce stove-piped Information Technology service solutions and replace them wherever possible with joint enterprise solutions and capabilities that are more effective at reduced costs.

Our forces have relied upon the funds appropriated in the fiscal year 2009 budget request to accomplish equipment reset and to address readiness shortfalls.

Congress's continued support is necessary for the predictable, adequate funding required for the repair and replacement of both operational and training equipment. I ask for your continued support for the upcoming fiscal year 2010 funding request. I fully support the vision Secretary Gates has laid out – and which the President has endorsed and forwarded – for the Department and the joint force. This vision and its program decisions emphasize our people first. Our advanced technology, superior weapons systems, and proven doctrine won't produce effective organizations absent quality men and women. These decisions also balance our efforts by addressing the fights we are in and most likely to encounter again without sacrificing conventional capability. That balance helps to check programs that have exceeded their original design, improve efficiency, and steward the resources taxpayers provide us for the common defense. The holistic changes we are making work in combination with one another and span the joint force. I am confident that they not only preserve our war fighting edge but also inject the flexibility required to address today's most relevant challenges.

An area of particular interest is energy – which is essential to military operations. Our in-theater fuel demand has the potential to constrain our operational flexibility and increase the vulnerability of our forces. Thus your Armed Forces continue to seek innovative ways to enhance operational effectiveness by reducing total force energy demands. We are also looking to improve energy security by institutionalizing energy considerations in our business processes, establishing energy efficiency and sustainability metrics, and increasing the availability of alternative sources.

The ongoing revitalization of the joint force makes our conventional deterrent more credible, which helps prevent future wars while winning the wars we are now fighting. Restoring our forces is an investment in security – one which is hard in tough economic times – but one that is required in an exceedingly uncertain and complex security environment. Understanding that environment and having forces capable of the full range of military operations is central to balancing global strategic risk.

Balancing Global Strategic Risk

My third priority of balancing global strategic risk is aimed at the core functions of our military – to protect the homeland, deter conflict, and be prepared to defeat enemies. Each function is tied to today's conflicts and each requires continuous attention. Successful campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan and improved partnership with Pakistan will take us far in the fight against al-Qaeda, although the network has spread tentacles across Asia, Africa, and Europe that we will continue to attack. These campaigns have two functions: first, deterring future conflict, and second, staying prepared by building networks of capable partners who help us see conflict brewing and are ready to stand with us if prevention fails. These functions help to protect and secure the global commons: sea, air, space, and cyberspace. Increasingly, we are encountering more security challenges to these nodes and networks of global commerce. In cyberspace, we are continuing proactive steps to pursue effective organizational constructs and to reshape attitudes, roles and responsibilities; we must increasingly see our information systems as war fighting tools equal in necessity to tanks, aircraft, ships, and other weapon systems. The nation must work to increase the security of all vital government and commercial internet domains and improve coordination between all U.S. Government agencies and appropriate private sectors. One related step in strengthening the military's operations in the commons that I continue to support is the United States' accession to the Law of the Sea Convention. This Convention provides a stable legal regime by reaffirming the sovereign immunity of our warships, preserving the right to conduct military activities in exclusive economic zones, ensuring unimpeded transit passage through international straits, and providing a framework to counter excessive claims of other states.

We must be sized, shaped, and postured globally to detect, deter, and confront the threats of the future. At the same time we must leverage the opportunities for international cooperation while building the capacity of partners for stability. These capacity building efforts are investments, with small amounts of manpower and resources, which can, over time, reduce the need to commit U.S.

forces. I recognize, as do the Combatant Commanders, that our ability to do so is constrained by ongoing operations, but that does not make building partner capacity any less important. We can magnify the peaceful effects we seek by helping emerging powers become constructive actors in the international system. Fostering closer international cooperation, particularly in today's distressed economic climate, is one method of preventing nations from turning inward or spiraling into conflict and disorder.

The wars we are fighting limit our capacity to respond to future contingencies and preclude robust global partnership building programs. While necessary, our focus on the current mission also offers potential adversaries, both state and non-state, incentives to act. We must not allow today's technological and organizational arrangements to impede our preparation for tomorrow's challenges, which include irregular, traditional and cyber warfare. In cyberspace, one often overlooked challenge is the need for military forces to maintain access to and freedom of action in this global domain. Our command and control and most sensitive information are constantly threatened by intrusion, interruption, and exploitation efforts. We must understand these risks in the context of the combined arms fight and carefully weigh their effects on our national security and global missions. This is true for the military as well as our nation's public and private sector cyberspace. In all, we continue to mitigate the risk we face in the ability to respond rapidly to other contingencies through a variety of measures. Restoring balance to our forces, however, remains the principal mitigation necessary for the long-term.

Enduring alliances and partnerships extend our reach. In each relationship we remain wedded to this Nation's principles which respect human rights and adhere to the rule of law. The 28 nation North Atlantic Treaty Organization, designed for a far different mission decades ago, has proven adaptive to the times and now leads the security and stability mission in Afghanistan. Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and Japan have made key contributions to operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. India has emerged as an increasingly important strategic partner. We seek to mature this partnership and

address common security challenges globally as well as within the region. Singapore, Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines continue to work with us to counter international terrorist threats in Southeast Asia while Thailand remains a significant partner in supporting humanitarian assistance and disaster response in South and Southeast Asia. The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership has worked to counter transnational terrorist threats in north and west Africa, and cooperative efforts with the Gulf of Guinea nations has generated improvements in maritime security against piracy, illegal trafficking, and overfishing off Africa's west coast. Multinational efforts in the Gulf of Aden are helping stem the unwanted scourge of piracy emanating from Somalia, though much work remains to be done. Colombia continues a successful counterinsurgency campaign in the Andean Ridge that reflects the patient, steady partnership between our nations, and we are particularly grateful for the Colombian Armed Forces' impressive rescue of three Americans held in FARC captivity last July. Military-to-military relationships with Mexico and Canada help to improve homeland security. In the coming year, in coordination with the Department of Homeland Security, we will work to improve cooperation with Mexico via training, resources, and intelligence sharing as Mexico takes on increased drug-related violence. The examples above represent far broader efforts and partially illuminate how enhancing teamwork with allies and partners helps to protect our shared interests. The interdependency of nations should not be allowed to unravel under economic duress, and these security focused programs are one way of reinforcing beneficial ties that bind.

We also seek to further cooperation with states not in our formal alliances. We have established relationships with the nations in the Caucasus and Central Asia to build a transportation network in support of our efforts in Afghanistan. We recognize the key role Russia plays and are encouraged by Russian assistance with this project. There is more we can do together to bring peace and security to the people of Afghanistan. At the same time, we are troubled by the Russian-Georgian conflict last August and while we acknowledge Russia's security concerns, its actions created a more difficult international situation and damaged

its relationship with NATO and the United States. We look forward to resuming military-to-military engagement, as part of our broader relationship, in a manner that builds confidence, enhances transparency, and rights the path towards cooperation.

We likewise seek to continue improved relations with China, which is each year becoming a more important trading partner of the United States. We acknowledge the positive trends in our bilateral relations with China even as we maintain our capabilities to meet commitments in the region, given the security and stability that credible U.S. power has promoted in the western Pacific for over 60 years. We seek common understanding on issues of mutual concern but must recognize China's unmistakable and growing strength in technological, naval, and air capabilities, and this growth's effect on China's neighbors. While we are concerned over events such as the confrontation between USNS IMPECCABLE and Chinese vessels, we support China's growing role as a regional and global partner. I believe both governments can synchronize common interests in the Pacific. Key among these interests are continued joint efforts aimed at reducing the chance of conflict on the Korean peninsula and the return of North Korea to the Six Party Talks. This is particularly true given North Korea's recent nuclear test and continued testing of intercontinental ballistic missiles in the face of United Nations Security Council Resolutions demanding that it halt nuclear tests or launch of ballistic missiles.

Rebalancing strategic risk also means addressing capability gaps. Our Nation's cyber vulnerabilities could have devastating ramifications to our national security interests. Interruption of access to cyberspace, whether in the public or private sectors, has the potential to substantively damage national security. We cannot conduct effective military operations without freedom of action in cyberspace. Addressing this threat, the President's budget for fiscal year 2010 includes funds to reduce cyber vulnerabilities and to close some of the operational and policy seams between military, government, and commercial Internet domains. Likewise, and related to maintaining a secure global information grid, freedom of action in Space remains vital to our economic, civil,

and military well being. We need to ensure access to cyberspace and Space as surely as we must have access to the sea and air lanes of the global commons. We must also balance the needs of the Combatant Commanders in Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance sensors and processing infrastructure that are proving ever more crucial in missions that span the globe.

Fighting and winning wars will always be the military's most visible mission. Preventing wars through deterrence, however, is preferable. In our strategic deterrence mission, deterring nuclear threats is most crucial. Our nation remains engaged in many vital efforts to counter nuclear proliferation and reduce global stockpiles through international agreements and support activities. Still, many states and non-state actors have or actively seek these weapons. To preserve a credible deterrent we will need safe, secure, and reliable nuclear weapons, an effective infrastructure to sustain that enterprise, and skilled people to support it. In addition, as our strategic deterrence calculus expands to address new and varied threats, proven missile defense capabilities will remain essential as tools to deter, dissuade and assure in an environment of WMD and ballistic missile proliferation.

Persistent Engagement

Our vital national interests call for a wise, long-term investment in global persistent engagement. For military forces, persistent engagement requires successfully conducting ongoing stability operations and building capacity with allies and partners. These efforts range from advising defense ministries to training host nation forces to conducting joint exercises to sharing intelligence to exchanging professional students. Over time, such actions help to provide the basic level of security from which economic development, representative political institutions, and diplomatic initiatives can take permanent root. Persistent engagement demonstrates enduring U.S. commitment, though, importantly, this commitment must be tempered with humility and a realistic assessment of the

limits of our influence. The goal is always to empower partners, who are ultimately the only ones who can achieve lasting results.

During my travels, I've developed a more comprehensive appreciation of the value that personal relationships, fostered over time, bring to our security endeavors. At the senior level, these relationships provide insight and alert us to signals we might have otherwise missed, as such, providing us warning of conflict which can then be used to head off a brewing storm in some cases. These relationships should not be limited to just senior leaders. Rather, they should be developed throughout the careers of our officers and their partner nation colleagues. Such sustained cooperation builds a network of military-to-military contacts that ultimately provides avenues to defuse crises, assure access, institutionalize cooperation, and address common threats.

As I noted in particular with Pakistan, the criticality of "mil-to-mil" exchanges, combined exercises, schoolhouse visits, professional education collaboration, and many other programs are all part of the robust outreach we require. In particular, I ask that the Congress fully fund the Department of State's Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and International Military Education and Training (IMET) programs and Global Train and Equip Programs, which the Departments of State and Defense jointly manage. While many militaries around the world clamor to train with us, we reap far more than the costs of these programs in terms of personal, sustained relationships. These relationships help us bridge difficult political situations by tapping into trust developed over the course of years. I cannot overemphasize the importance of these programs. They require only small amounts of funding and time for long term return on investment that broadly benefits the United States.

I endorse a similar approach for and with our interagency partners, and I fully support the building of a Civilian Response Corps. Achieving the objectives of any campaign requires increased emphasis not only on fully developing and resourcing the capacity of other U.S. agencies (State, USAID, Agriculture, Treasury, and Commerce and so forth), but also on increasing our Nation's ability to build similar interagency capacities with foreign partners.

Conclusion

In providing my best military advice over the past 18 months, one important point I have made, consonant with Secretary Gates, is that our military activities must support rather than lead our Nation's foreign policy. Our war fighting ability will never be in doubt. But we have learned from the past seven years of war that we serve this Nation best when we are part of a comprehensive, integrated approach that employs all elements of power to achieve the policy goals set by our civilian leaders. To this end, I believe we should fully fund the State Department as the lead agent of U.S. diplomacy and development, an action that would undoubtedly resonate globally. This approach obviously requires the backing of a robust military and a strong economy. As we win the wars we are fighting and restore the health of our Armed Forces, the military's approach will increasingly support our diplomatic counterparts through the persistent engagement required to build networks of capable partners. By operating globally, hand-in-hand with partners and integrated with the interagency and non-governmental organizations, we will more successfully protect the citizens of this Nation.

On behalf of our service members, I would like to thank Congress for the sustained investment in them and for your unwavering support in time of war.